



# *Milwaukee County*

Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic, 4<sup>th</sup> District



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## **COUNTY BOARD APPROVES SUPERVISOR DIMITRIJEVIC'S WELLNESS PLAN TO REDUCE EMPLOYEE HEALTH CARE COSTS**

**Milwaukee, WI** – Supervisor Marina Dimitrijevic's S.T.E.P. Up (Stronger Team through Employee Participation) employee wellness plan was approved at today's County Board budget adoption. The plan is aimed at encouraging employees to pursue healthier lifestyle choices while lowering health care costs.

"I thank the County Board for making this smart, creative investment. It will pay large dividends in the future. Considering the budget challenges we face for 2012, there's no better time than now to reverse the trend of rising health care costs," Supervisor Dimitrijevic said. "We are taking a page out of success stories from both the public and private sector. The time is now for Milwaukee County to credit our employees who want to improve their health. This is a true team approach."

In the typical wellness structure, employees participate in an annual screening and develop a plan to help them stay or get healthy. For example, depending on which risks are identified, participants could be referred to a smoking cessation program, be given a diet/exercise program, or be advised to see a doctor.

Health care costs are driven by a handful of diseases — including hypertension, diabetes and heart disease — that can be managed or prevented. But the required lifestyle adjustments are easy to put off, especially if the problem isn't detected. The STEP Up plan rewards employees for their participation and includes a surcharge for employees who decline to participate or who smoke.

Similar initiatives are already used by local public and private sector employers, including the City of Milwaukee, Milwaukee Public Schools, Northwestern Mutual and Quad/Graphics.

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